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Health Districts:

Richmond, Chesterfield, Henrico,
Chickahomony, Crater, Piedmont,
Southside and Thomas Jefferson

Pandemic Flu Crisis Communications

- Strategy
- Message Mapping
- Understanding the media

Crisis Communications

Crisis communications is **more** than what you do during a crisis...

It's communicating before, during and after a crisis.

Public Relations Strategy (Develop a plan now)

- 95% of concerns and questions for any crisis can be predicted in advance
- 95% of all crisis messaging should be done prior to a crisis
- 95% of all those who would serve as spokesperson can be trained prior to an event.

How to Develop Key Messages

- Brainstorm – Think freely and jot down all pieces of information.
- Select Key Messages – Identify the most important ideas until you have narrowed your list to three key items.
- Identify Supporting Data – Review your ideas and find information that supports your key messages.

Anticipate

- Scenarios
- Stakeholders/Partners
- Questions and Concerns

Messages Should... Ease Public Concern

- Symptoms are easily recognized.
- The risk is low when taking the following steps: wash your hands often...etc
- We've taken steps to protect our staff.

Message Don'ts

- Use jargon, acronyms
- Be judgmental or give your personal opinion
- Speculate

Principles of Message Mapping

Rule of 3
(The Power of Three)
27/9/3

Message Mapping

Template: 27/9/3

In high stress situations the brain can hold on average:

- 27 words (for all 3 key messages)
- 9 seconds (messages averaging 9 words in length)
- 3 messages

Message Map #2

Key Message 1 It's possible for avian flu to spread to humans	Key Message 2 An outbreak is possible	Key Message 3 Vaccines, when developed will be distributed
Support 1.1 Avian flu rarely affects humans	Support 2.1 Disease can be spread from country to country	Support 3.1 Priority will go to healthcare workers
Support 1.2 The bird virus could combine with human virus to spread more easily	Support 2.2 Plans are being developed to produce vaccine quickly	Support 3.2 High risk populations next
Support 1.3 Avian flu can cause serious disease and death	Support 2.3 Anti-viral drugs will be stockpiled	Support 3.3 Research trials on vaccine will be completed soon.

Communication Strategies

- Focus less on “we need your commitment” and more on “you can do it and here’s how”
- Remind people that they make a difference
- Give them things to do in steps to master the skills

Other Strategies

- Overcome dread and uncertainty by sharing honest information early
- Overcome helplessness and fear by promoting protective actions
- Overcome despair by engaging people in the response

Leader's role

- Becomes a symbol of order among chaos
- Authoritative/charismatic leader style in crisis
- Help people reduce fear, anxiety, despondency

Part II

Understanding the Players

- TV
- Radio
- Newspapers

Television Reporters

- Could have from one to four stories in a day
- Stories range from (:20 sec) voice-overs (VOs) to (1:30) news packages
- Stories could change at any moment
- Often very little background or knowledge of subject

Television Reporters

- Looking for the quick sound-bite on tape (8 to 12 seconds)
- Need something visual to tell the story
- Can be taped or live, but most often in person
- Looking for emotional statements, or statements only experts can say or opinions

Radio

- Numerous stories a day
- Stories vary in length
- Sound-bites are about 15 seconds long
- Reporters need to be educated
- Stories change a number of times each day

Radio

- Various deadlines throughout the day—heaviest during rush hour “drive times”
- May conduct live or taped interviews in person or over the phone
- Visuals not necessary, but sound is a big plus

Newspaper Reporters

- Usually have longer deadlines
- Develop more in-depth stories
- May be working on multiple stories
- Usually better educated on the subject

Newspaper Reporters

- May want a visual, but don't always come with a photographer
- Can do follow-up stories
- Write a longer, more detailed stories than radio and tv reporters

Questions?

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